

## Oil Catcher

On April 20, 2010 an explosion on the Deepwater Horizon oil rig in the Gulf of Mexico started the largest oilspill in history, a spill that has been spewing the equivalent of the Exxon Valdez spill every two weeks since that date eleven weeks ago.

This event was headline news for a while. First the focus was on BP's failed attempts to cap the well and stop the flow. During this time we saw many pictures of oiled pelicans and seagulls floundering in the surf on the beaches completely incapacitated by the oil, giant turtles lying dead on the sand, dolphins and fish, dead at the edge of the water, hermit crabs desperately trying to escape the oil.

Next the news told us President Obama was really angry with BP and would hold them accountable for the damage. Then we started to hear more about the real impact on the lives of the people in that region, lives that are changed forever. The truth is we are all accountable, and my belief is that the damage wreaked by this oil leak will probably not be repaired in the remaining time left for life on this planet as we know it, unless of course there are some radical shifts in human behaviour.

Now 11 weeks later when I search for Gulf Oil spill on-line I'm hard pressed to find any current coverage – yet we know it hasn't gone away.

For a time I was hopeful that the massive uncontrollable nature of this event would make a difference to the prevailing attitude about the wisdom of continuing to drill for oil underwater – but alas it seems we are back to business as usual. That makes me wonder what it would take to really shift perspectives around the question of our gluttonous consumption of oil.

This piece, conceived from the deep grief in me over the bleeding gash in the earth and the devastation of life around it, asks you to consider the waste we are creating with our addiction to oil. The found plastic objects from the beach on Toronto Island are a sampling of the thousands of products we use daily that are sourced in a petrochemical base. Every time a piece of plastic is carelessly discarded on the beach, we are saying we don't care about life on this planet in the long term, all that is really meaningful is gratification in the moment. This level of denial has become so integrated into our culture that many of us don't even know what we are doing.

This piece is a cry from the earth, our beloved planet, the one we live on, the one that gives us life, and it's a cry from my heart for I cannot bear to see the suffering of my fellow creatures caused by our foolishness and consumption.

Medwyn McConachy - Gibraltar Point, Toronto Island - July 2010